

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for breeding of producing~~ tomato plants that ~~produce tomatoes~~fruit with reduced fruit water content comprising the steps ~~of~~capable of natural dehydration comprising:

(a) ~~crossing at least one *Lycopersicon esculentum* plant with a *Lycopersicon* spp. to produce hybrid seed~~plants;

~~collecting the first generation of hybrid seeds;~~

~~growing plants from the first generation of hybrid seeds;~~

~~pollinating the plants of the most recent hybrid generation;~~

~~collecting the seeds produced by the most recent hybrid generation;~~

~~growing plants from the seeds of the most recent hybrid generation;~~

~~allowing plants to remain on the vine past the point of normal ripening; and~~

(b) ~~growing said hybrid plants past a stage of fruit ripening; and~~

(c) ~~screening said hybrid plants for and isolating plants having fruit dehydration accompanied by extended preservation of the ripe fruit, wherein the ripe fruit has lost at least 30% of its red ripe fruit water content exhibiting a wrinkling phenotype, thereby producing tomato fruit capable of natural dehydration.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the steps~~step (a) is effected by ~~of~~pollinating, collecting the seeds, and growing ~~said hybrid plants are repeated at least once.~~

3. – 4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ said *Lycopersicon* spp. plant is a *Lycopersicon hirsutum* plant.

6. – 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising and additionally comprising the step of propagating the plants with harvesting said tomato fruits having the desired characteristics offollowing fruit dehydrationwrinkling-aecompained by extended preservation of the ripe fruit, wherein the ripe fruit has lost at least 30% of its red ripe fruit water content.

12. – 14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) An isolated -whole tomato fruit of the *Lycopersicon esculentum* species characterized by skin wrinkling caused by natural fruit dehydrationa capability of natural dehydration while on a tomato plant, natural dehydration being defined as loss of at least 30% of red ripe fruit water content when the fruit is allowed to remain on the plant after a normal ripe harvest stage, said natural dehydration being generally unaccompained by microbial spoilage.

16. (Currently Amended) An isolated -whole tomato fruit of the *Lycopersicon esculentum* species characterized by skin wrinkling and an untreated skin which permits dehydration of the fruit so as to obtain loss of at least 30% of red ripe fruit water content, said dehydration being generally unaccompained by microbial spoilage.